

## Kentucky Heritage Foundation Video Tapes

Calvin Campbell

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I've been going through some VHS tapes made in the late 1990s by the Kentucky Heritage Foundation through Lewis Productions. Lewis Productions, in the person of Leslie Lewis, has granted me permission to put these tapes on YouTube and talk about the dances in this blog. So, the people who view this blog are going to receive a real treat over the next several months, by seeing performances and dances by four of the best leaders in the business of doing beginner dance parties.

The four talents are Bob Howell, Don Armstrong, Jerry Helt and Stew Shacklett. I had the great pleasure of spending a lot of time working with each of these men over the years. Bob Howell and Don Armstrong were two of my main mentors. I first encountered them as a young caller in my late 20s at the Lloyd Shaw Fellowship.

I first met Stew Shacklett at the first national historical dance pageant that was held at the 1959 National Square Dance Convention in Denver, Colorado. Both Stew and I were leaders of scenes in that pageant. My group, The Aggie Haylofters, was doing a Royal Lancers and Stews dancers were doing a Kentucky Running set. Over the years we became fast friends.

Jerry and Kathy Helt I met at CALLERLAB in the 1970s. CALLERLAB is the International Association of Square Dance Callers. At the time, I still considered myself a novice in art of doing beginner dance parties and Jerry presentation skills impressed me greatly. Jerry in turn was kind enough to share what he did so well and I benefitted greatly from his experience.

The VHS tapes were all taken at a beautiful dance hall Leslie Lewis and her husband build on their property in Brandenburg, Kentucky. As you will notice, in the videos, it had a beautiful wood floor and the acoustics were wonderful. It was a wonderful gift to all the dancers in the area. I have seen the facility, but I never called there. I lived 2000+ miles away in Colorado.

As with all videos taken in the 1990s, the capabilities of the camcorders was limited and the editing equipment was primitive. The Lewis's did a wonderful job with the technology they had. With the present technology, I've been able to improve on the images and the sound. There was no need to try to improve on the performances.